

## CLAIMS

### WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for remotely conducting medical imaging transactions conducive to meeting the individualized imaging needs of a plurality of users, the method comprising:
  - providing a user interface configured to present a menu of prompts to a user of a respective medical imager and/or imaging equipment associated with the imager, the menu of prompts configured to elicit information indicative of imaging performance of the medical imager and/or equipment relative to imaging preferences of the user;
  - transmitting the information indicative of the imaging performance over a communications network to an imaging service center;
  - providing a database accessible to the service center, the database configured to store the information indicative of the imaging performance of the medical imager and/or imaging equipment, the database further configured to store the imaging preferences of the user;
  - processing the information stored in the database relative to a set of business rules to select imaging upgrades configured to improve the operational performance of the medical imager; and
  - transmitting the imaging upgrades to reconfigure the imager and/or associated equipment so that the individualized imaging needs of each user are achieved based on the imaging upgrades.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the imaging upgrades comprise an upgraded set of imaging parameters for controlling the imager and/or upgraded imaging processing algorithms.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the imaging equipment comprises an imaging probe and the imaging upgrade comprises selecting a probe from a database of available probes for the imager.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the imaging equipment comprises an imaging probe and the imaging upgrade comprises selecting a new probe design configured to meet a desired imaging preference of the user.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the new probe design is based on design assistance derived from a probe design wizard accessible by the user through the communications network.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the medical imager is selected from the group consisting of ultrasound, magnetic resonance, X-ray, computer tomography, and nuclear imagers.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising accumulating historical information indicative of the imaging performance of the medical imager and/or equipment relative to imaging preferences of each user for a plurality of corresponding imagers and/or equipment.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising processing the accumulated historical information to determine trends regarding user-imaging preferences.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising determining allocation of resources for new imaging products and/or services based on the trends regarding user preferences.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the information indicative of the imaging performance transmitted to the imaging service center comprises an image generated subject to the imaging preferences of the user.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising comparing the transmitted image relative to reference images corresponding to the imaging preferences of the user, and, based on the results of the comparison, issuing a recommendation to the user regarding the medical imager and/or imaging equipment.

12. A system for remotely conducting medical imaging transactions conducive to meeting the individualized imaging needs of a plurality of users, the system comprising:

a user interface configured to present a menu of prompts to a user of a respective medical imager and/or imaging equipment associated with the imager, the menu of prompts configured to elicit information indicative of imaging performance of the medical imager and/or equipment relative to imaging preferences of the user;

communications device configured to transmit the information indicative of the imaging performance over a communications network to an imaging service center;

a database accessible to the service center, the database configured to store the information indicative of the imaging performance of the medical imager and/or imaging equipment, the database further configured to store the imaging preferences of the user;

a processor configured to process the information stored in the database relative to a set of business rules to select imaging upgrades configured to improve the operational performance of the medical imager; and

communications device configured to transmit the imaging upgrades to reconfigure the imager and/or associated equipment so that the individualized imaging needs of each user are achieved based on the imaging upgrades.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein the imaging upgrades comprise an upgraded set of imaging parameters for controlling the imager and/or upgraded imaging processing algorithms.

14. The system of claim 12 wherein the imaging equipment comprises an imaging probe and the imaging upgrade comprises selecting a probe from a database of available probes for the imager.

15. The system of claim 12 wherein the imaging equipment comprises an imaging probe and the imaging upgrade comprises selecting a new probe design configured to meet a desired imaging preference of the user.

16. The system of claim 14 wherein the new probe design is based on design assistance derived from a probe design wizard accessible by the user through the communications network.

17. The system of claim 12 wherein the medical imager is selected from the group consisting of ultrasound, magnetic resonance, X-ray, computer tomography, and nuclear imagers.

18. The system of claim 12 further comprising a database configured to accumulate historical information indicative of the imaging performance of the medical imager and/or equipment relative to imaging preferences of each user for a plurality of corresponding imagers and/or equipment.

19. The system of claim 18 further comprising a processor module configured to process the accumulated historical information to determine trends regarding user-imaging preferences.

20. The system of claim 19 further comprising a new product introduction module configured to determine allocation of resources for new imaging products and/or services based on the trends regarding user preferences.

21. The system of claim 12 wherein the information indicative of the imaging performance transmitted to the imaging service center comprises an image generated subject to the imaging preferences of the user.

22. The system of claim 21 further comprising a comparator configured to compare the transmitted image relative to reference images corresponding to the imaging preferences of the user, and, based on the results of the comparison, issuing a recommendation to the user regarding the medical imager and/or imaging equipment.